

Beatles Mono versus Stereo Listening Sessions: 2009 Digital Remasters



This project was stimulated by Giles Martin's remix of the stereo version of Sgt Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band in 2017, and his demonstration that the mono version had heretofore been vastly superior to the original stereo mix, and all subsequent stereo mixes.

There have been two strong camps, bitterly divided between mono and stereo being superior, but I found little evidence of track by track listening for a combination of timbre and soundstage with the ears of an acoustic musician on a superior stereo system.

The opinion that the monos can be a little muddy and that the stereo versions are clearer but have issues with panning is more or less correct. The opinion that "all monos are best" is simply wrong.

And "muddy" is a little misleading. Although the Beatles album covers do not say this, this was a time where we were recovering from the "lame crooner" era, where vocals were king and musicians were not even credited. The Who albums of this era actually said "Vocals with instrumental accompaniment" on the album covers, and their mixes and these mono Beatles mixes reflect this. The drums, bass, guitar, rhythm guitar and/or piano can be subservient to solo vocals and vocal choruses, except for guitar solos, and even these solos can be a little bit muted.

The stereo mixes generally have a bit more clarity. The drums, bass and rhythm guitar are **no louder** or "punchier" than in the mono mixes, but they are panned out to different sides (largely drums, bass and rhythm guitar left, and piano/solo guitar right.) You can hear all the instruments with a little more clarity. Mostly the vocals are panned hard right and this is jarring in the extreme to my ears.

But...the individual tracks vary, sometimes amazingly. The stereo panning can be so terrible on some tracks that there is no soundstage or imaging whatsoever, and the mono version sounds more like a real band in a room together. A few of the stereo versions are stellar. Generally, the mono recordings get better and better from album to album, with more clarity and more "air" around the vocals and each instrument. By the time we get to "Money" on With the Beatles, it is much better. There is real presence here.

The First Three Non-Film Recordings:

Here they are: album by album, track by track. This is limited to a "best of" ...the music most people would recognize, or just songs I prefer! They are mostly originals rather than covers (which were about half the material in the early days.)



Please Please Me

I Saw Her Standing There, Ask Me Why, Please Please Me. All vocals hard panned right, along with the harmonica in Please Please Me. John flubs a line in the stereo mix and chuckles on the first "come on." Horribly off synch in the ending.

All are jarring and terrible. Mono vastly superior.

Love Me Do. Harmonica panned a little right, vocal in centre. Great stereo for its time (especially in England, which lagged behind the US) ...stereo preferred.

P.S. I Love You Vocals centred, instrument well panned and distinct. Good stereo...preferred.

(I don't know how this occurred on just these two tracks of the better material on this first record and why they didn't mix like this for all the tracks.... it's mystifying!)

Do You Want to Know a Secret and Twist and Shout. Vocals panned hard right. Mono preferred.

The sound is not very good generally, it gets much better on the following album, especially one superb track.



with
the
beatles

mono



With the Beatles

All My Loving, I Wanna Be Your Man. Vocals panned hard right, drums a little more distinct because they are on the left, mono preferred.

Not A Second Time Mono quite muddy, but stereo ugly and harsh! Little more distinct piano on the stereo. Mono preferred.

MONEY What an incredible recording. Very clear mono. Stereo panning very good with piano right, guitar left and vocal centred. Piano tone sounds different comparing both mixes. Guitar starts earlier in the stereo mix. A dead heat for sound quality. Possibly the very best of the early non-film Beatles recordings, both in stereo and mono.



Beatles for Sale (4th release, after A Hard Day's Night)

I'm A Loser. Very strange stereo panning. The vocal is centred. but the drums start on the left, then move to the center. If they'd started with the drums centred, I'd prefer the stereo, but the mono is better.

I'll Follow the Sun Good pan! Vocal and bass centred, rhythm guitar and drums left, solo guitar right. Stereo preferred.

Kansas City. Dead heat between mono and stereo. Both excellent. Great solo guitar on the right in the stereo version. Best guitar solo of the early Beatles, in my opinion.

Eight Days A Week. Mono quite muddy and the handclaps buried with the drum sound. FANTASTIC stereo version!!! Unfortunate board fade-in at the beginning in both versions, which I frankly never noticed before. Decidedly unmusical decision that probably prevents this from being as amazing a classic as "Money."

Ironic that the single best recording of these first three (non-film) albums is not a Lennon-McCartney tune. Out of the top four (in my opinion), two are covers. But...seventeen of the tunes on these first three albums are covers.

For the next two recordings (music from the film A Hard Day's Night), Martin was tending to put vocals centred, rhythm section left, and solo instruments right. This displayed Pauls' incredible bass playing and Ringo's very musical drumming to great effect...as well as George's guitar and Paul's piano. Lennon was a capable rhythm guitar player...but arguably the least important instrumentally in the group in the early years. Later, when he added some ferociously dirty "electric" guitar (like in Revolution), he drove the band and added some great snarl to the sound...but his time wasn't great and his attacks were a little blurred and clumsy in my opinion. Good feel, but not technically great. Besides being one of the greatest bass players of his era, Paul contributed some of the most amazing Beatles guitar solos, on Taxman, Good Morning Good Morning, Tomorrow Never Knows, and Back in the USSR.

Best of the early Film Music

Hands-down, 2009 Stereo remixes. Not even a contest.



A Hard Day's Night

At last, almost all originals. All the mono is indistinct, some tracks worse than others. The definition, richness and clarity of the instruments in particular is vastly superior in stereo. The background vocals are also enhanced. There is even a hint of actual imaging. Good panning in all the stereo versions.

All the positive comments below are far better than the mono versions, where these elements come off quite muted.

A Hard Day's Night

Ringo's closed high hat and the guitar sound have much more presence and richness.

I Should Have Known Better

The harmonica opening breaks off briefly just before John starts singing and then stops more abruptly. Obviously, a different take than the mono. Some of the vocal in the chorus is single instead of double tracked compared to the mono. Still much better, though! The entire production is rawer than the mono, with more snarl from John's rhythm guitar.

And I Love Her

Woodblock, rhythm guitar far more audible. Solo guitar obbligato with rhythm guitar backing is much more distinct.

All of the next 3 Stereo tracks are really excellent.

Can't Buy Me Love

The vocal is buried a bit in the mono. The guitar sound is awesome in the stereo. And the "oooow" scream at the end of the first verse is raw and has much more presence. This mono is one of the two worst of the mono mixes.

When I Get Home

Nice ride cymbal shimmer and richness. Backup vocals very distinct and separate from the lead.

You Can't Do That

Great cowbell. All the percussion character is much better on all the tracks. Again, excellent background vocal presence and distinction. The other "muddier" mono mix.



Help

The first all-originals Beatles album. The first true stereo mix, and the mono boxed set CD include the original 1967 stereo mix.

The 2009 mono and original 1967 stereo mixes are poor, except for the mono on Ticket to Ride which is just OK. Yesterday's mono mix sucks the big hairy banana, as does the '67 stereo mix of You've Got To Hide Your Love Away and both the mono and 67 stereo mixes of You're Going to Lose That Girl.

Yesterday '09 Stereo mix is magnificent.

Help!

Mono poor. 67 Stereo vocals all panned left. 09 Stereo good imaging and clarity and panning.

You've Got to Hide Your Love Away

Mono poor. 67 Stereo terrible...vocals panned left and almost no presence of anything on the right channel but tambourine. 09 Stereo vocals centred, all the rhythm on the left except for the incredibly crisp, rich and alive tambourine on the right...it's like a solo instrument in this tune. Fantastic.

You're Going to Lose That Girl

Mono terrible. 67 Stereo also muddy and terrible. Missing all the upper partials from all instruments and voices. 09 Stereo good panning, incredible guitar sound and backup vocals.

Ticket To Ride

Best of the mono tracks, not so indistinct except for the drum sound. 67 Stereo panned too wide with not much center. 09 Stereo still panned a bit too wide, but very rich clear sound with great drum and guitar presence. Overall, the worst recorded of all the tracks, but 09 Stereo still preferred.

Yesterday

Terrible mono, very dull sound and mostly vocal presence with no upper partials. Warm, but boring. No presence from the string quartet. 67 Stereo acoustic guitar panned hard right, vocal and string quartet panned hard left. Weird. 09 Stereo much more instrumental presence and definition. String quartet very distinctive and can hear all four instruments much better. Guitar panned right, strings panned left, with vocal in center. The unison vocal with guitar melody moments are startlingly together, in tune and perfect articulation. First proof that Paul is a genius as a writer and performer, and that George Martin was a genius as a producer/arranger. An iconic and beautiful work and by far the best mix of anything the Beatles have done up to this point, and it is all Paul with George Martin. The other stars are EMI senior studio engineers Allan Rouse and Guy Massey who remastered this stereo version.

I've built my own compilation of the best of the first five Beatles Albums.

Here is the track listing.

Please Please Me

1. I Saw Her Standing There *Mono*
2. Ask Me Why *Mono*
3. Please Please Me *Mono*
4. Love Me Do *Stereo*
5. P.S. I Love You *Stereo*
6. Do You Want To Know A Secret *Mono*
7. Twist and Shout *Mono*

With The Beatles

8. All My Loving *Mono*
9. I Wanna Be Your Man *Mono*
10. Not A Second Time *Mono*
- 11/12. Money *Mono/Stereo*

Beatles For Sale

13. I'm A Loser *Mono*
14. I'll Follow The Sun *Stereo*
- 15/16. Kansas City *Mono/Stereo*
17. Eight Days A Week *Stereo*

A Hard Day's Night All Stereo

18. A Hard Day's Night
19. I Should Have Known Better
20. And I Love Her
21. Can't Buy Me Love
22. When I Get Home
23. You Can't Do That

Help! All 2009 Stereo (67 mix was also on the Mono CD)

24. Help!
25. You've Got To Hide Your Love Away
26. You're Going To Lose That Girl
27. Ticket To Ride
28. Yesterday



Rubber Soul

Mono all the way. The most insane vocal panning decisions of all time on the stereo mix. I wish Giles Martin would make this his first priority to remix!

Some of the stereo versions can fool you just a bit at first, starting with the very first track. These tracks have backup vocals left and lead vocal right throughout the track with no solo lead vocal. It feels like the lead and backup are separated widely on stage and leaning into their individual microphones.... but you are sitting way too close to the stage so there is no unified sound. Even on these relatively palatable stereo tracks (Baby You Can Drive My Car, Think For Yourself and Michelle) the mono is more satisfying...it feels more like they are singing together....as if they were all leaning into a single mic like a folk-singer trio.

Except for one track, all the lead vocals are panned hard right and the backup vocals are panned differently from track to track.

There is little to no difference in instrumental balance or timbre between mono and stereo versions, so the vocal panning is what will make the difference in one's choice. The disparate mixing decisions on some of these panning choices from track to track is as mystifying as it is ludicrous. It almost seems like they are just screwing with us!

NB *The most frustrating thing about all the versions of this album is that the electric bass has no centre and is totally hollow sounding, with almost no attack present. Horrifically bad recording of one of the greatest bass players of all time on the first Beatles album that really matters.*

Baby You Can Drive My Car Lead Vocal Right, Backup Vocals Left
Background vocals are present throughout the entire cut, so this actually sounds OK, except for no feeling of centeredness.

Norwegian Wood Lead Vocal and Backup Vocals panned right. Criminal.

You Won't See Me Lead Vocal and Backup Vocals panned right.

Nowhere Man It opens with vocals only and the lead and backup vocals are both panned hard right. So.... nothing whatever on the left speaker until instruments join in. Jarring and ridiculous.

Think for Yourself Lead vocal right, Backup vocals left
Background vocals are present throughout the entire cut, so this actually sounds OK, except for no feeling of centeredness.

The Word Lead Vocal right. Backup left AND right. Weird.

Michelle Lead vocal right. Backup vocals left.
Background vocals are present throughout the entire cut, so this actually sounds OK, except for no feeling of centeredness.

What Goes On Lead vocal **left**. Backup vocals **right**. *What is going on?*

Girl Lead vocal left. Backup vocals left and right.

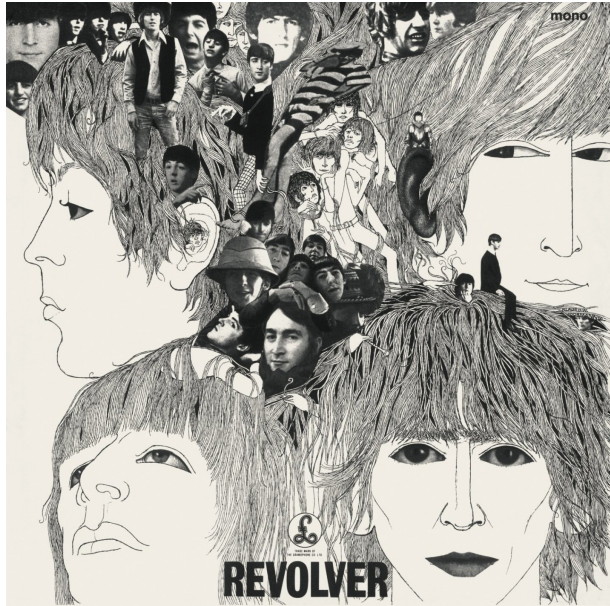
I'm Looking Through You Lead vocal and backup vocals right. *Again?*

In My Life Lead vocal and backup vocals right. *Sigh....*

Wait Lead vocal right, backup vocals mostly right with a little left. *What the???*

If I Needed Someone Lead vocal right and backup vocals right. *I give up....forget the stereo release.*

Run For Your Life Lead vocal right, backup vocals left.



Now this is more like it! Pretty decent stereo work on many of the tracks. All the mono is great. Nice punch and tonal centre on the bass sound, thank God. Too bad they didn't do a better job like some of this on the previous album.... which I consider a much stronger song collection.

Taxman

Stereo: Vocals mostly centred, rhythm guitar left, drums right. Crisp, detailed. Solo Guitar panned right. "Ha, Ha, Mr Wilson and Mr. Heath panned right." Somehow makes a complete "whole" on the soundstage.

Eleanor Rigby

Stereo: Backup vocals panned left and right. String quartet panned left. Lead vocal panned right. Maybe this shouldn't really work, but it almost seems like a duet between the cello and other strings on the left and lead vocals on the right. Then the lead blended with backups in the centre on the chorus brings it together. I really like it, despite the very abrupt ending.

I'm Only Sleeping

Very centred soundstage. Bass and rhythm panned left. Vocals and backup vocals drift a bit to the left and right from time to time, but it kind of adds to the dreamy surreal quality.

Love You To

George's rambling sitar noodling opens.... then gets driven rhythmically by the tabla. This is a boring warmup for the droning Within You, Without You on the next album. The recording is fine, but in future I would "program" this on my CD player to skip this tune. One assumes the rest of the band was just indulgent over this nonsense. I can always forgive George just because of "Something," one of the great love songs of all time.

Here, There and Everywhere

Just lovely. Lead vocal panned both left and right a bit widely separated and drifts to the right from time to time, with the backup vocals mostly leftish. Not good imaging, but still lovely. Mono preferred, the boys just sound like they are singing together so much more.

Yellow Submarine

More indulgence, this time for Ringo. Snore..... boring song with a singer who can't even cover an octave in range. Everyone still loves Ringo (including me), just like Harpo with the Marx brothers, and Dopey in Sleeping Beauty. Ringo is panned hard right, and there are lots of sound effects bouncing around. Dumb early use of stereo, but considering the song, who cares? Mono preferred, but why listen to it at all?

She Said She Said

Good centred vocals, mostly. If you cut Love You To, Yellow Submarine and this song, what a great (short) side one! Hmm...just move Good Day Sunshine, For No One, and Got To Get You Into My Life onto Side One and don't turn the record over!

Good Day Sunshine

Vocals a little spread out but maybe the best hint at actual imaging until the dumb ping-pong ball stereo vocals at the end! Worth listening to both versions.

And Your Bird Can Sing

Widely panned lead vocal and background vocal, not quite as good as the previous tune. Another abrupt ending. These guys sometimes don't know how to end a song. Mono preferred.

For No One

Nice French Horn work...a master player, all in the left channel. Vocal centred, piano right. Very good.

Doctor Robert

Vocal and backup vocal panned right but can drift to center, great rhythm guitar work panned left. Mono preferred.

I Want To Tell You

Vocals all a chorus and fairly centred but panned pretty wide at times. All the rhythm pretty much panned left. Mono preferred.

Got To Get You Into My Life

Love the swinging brass, panned right. Vocals panned left. Kind of works, but mono preferred. Got to get this onto side one, along with Good Day Sunshine. What a powerful side one we could have had! Guitar solo panned leftish and drifts toward center. Got to listen to both versions!

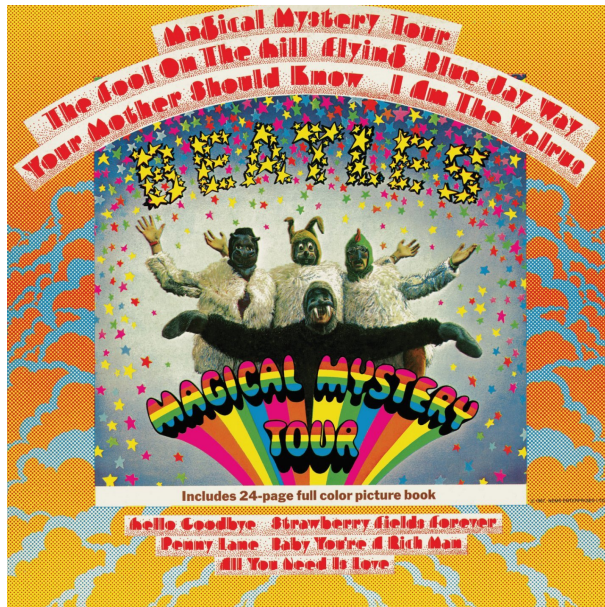
Tomorrow Never Knows

More sitar and droning vocals as well....at least they limited this nonsense to one tune on Sgt. Peppers. Oh well, we get some cool atonal strings and nasty growling electric guitar towards the end. Everything panned all over the place. Mono preferred.

OK, I made my own compilation of Rubber Soul and Revolver so as to pick the various preferred mono/stereo versions and leave out the weaker songs and amateur sitar, although at least I can listen to all of Rubber Soul in mono.

Rubber Revolver

- 1/2 Baby You Can Drive My Car *Mono/Stereo*
3. Norwegian Wood *Mono*
4. You Won't See Me *Mono*
5. Nowhere Man *Mono*
6. The Word *Mono*
- 7/8. Michelle *Mono/Stereo*
9. Girl *Mono*
10. I'm Looking Through You *Mono*
11. In My Life *Mono*
12. Wait *Mono*
13. Run For Your Life *Mono*
- 14/15 Taxman *Mono/Stereo*
16. Eleanor Rigby *Stereo*
17. I'm Only Sleeping *Stereo*
- 18/19. Here, There and Everywhere *Mono/Stereo*
- 20/21. Good Day Sunshine *Mono/Stereo*
22. And Your Bird Can Sing *Mono*
23. For No One *Stereo*
24. Doctor Robert *Mono*
25. I Want To Tell You *Mono*
- 26/27. Got To Get You Into My Life *Mono/Stereo*



Magical Mystery Tour

If you have to pick just one, it has to be the mono, unfortunately. While the stereo has more distinct instrumental sounds, four of the tracks have ludicrous vocal panning choices that make them unlistenable, despite the more hallucinogenic effect of the stereo mix.

Even more unfortunately, this affects one of the better songs on this very short album...The Fool on the Hill. The lead vocal and backup vocals move back and forth on this track, as they do on Your Mother Should Know and Baby You're A Rich Man. It's ridiculously distracting. Blue Jay Way has the lead vocal panned hard right and the backup vocals panned hard left. So does All You Need Is Love, but the horns sound so great on the stereo version that it is worth putting up with the gimmicky panning.

So.... I made myself a Magical Mystery Multiple mix. The complete mono, followed by the seven least gimmicky stereo tracks, followed by the Giles Martin stereo remixes of Strawberry Fields Forever and Penny Lane. I get to compare all of these easily, or just listen to the full mono, or listen to the stereo version leaving out the unlistenable tracks. I wish Giles would remix the entire stereo version of this!

Mono

1. Magical Mystery Tour
2. The Fool on the Hill (*Stereo vocal panning terrible*)
3. Flying
4. Blue Jay Way (*Stereo vocal panning terrible*)
- 5.. Your Mother Should Know (*Stereo vocal panning terrible*)
6. I Am The Walrus
7. Hello Goodbye
8. Strawberry Fields Forever
9. Penny Lane
10. Baby You're A Rich Man (*Stereo vocal panning terrible*)
11. All You Need Is Love (*Stereo gimmicky, but horns great*)

Stereo

12. Magical Mystery Tour
13. Flying
14. I Am The Walrus
15. Hello Goodbye
16. Strawberry Fields Forever
17. Penny Lane
18. All You Need Is Love (*Vcl panning gimmicky, but horns!*)

Giles Martin Stereo Remix

19. Strawberry Fields Forever 2015
20. Penny Lane 2017



Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band

2017 Giles Martin stereo remix blows everything else away. Makes me wish Giles would remix all the other albums!

Mono was multiple four-tracks condensed down to a very small space. Quite good, but the Giles remix far more open, clear and psychedelic. The vaunted mono comes off dull and murky.

Original stereo version quite veiled. Drums especially buried. Voices panned hard right due to the mix downs to get multi-tracking. Terrible.

Giles Martin 2017 remix went back to the original tapes, the intent being to make this version cleaner and less "layered" sounding. "And really, the way you should think about this mix is we're going from the freshest possible material. The thing about recording is that recording - the performance never gets old. It's the - you know, we get old. And recording as if sort of things are frozen in time. And so, everything we took was the earliest generation. And that's lots to do with why the album sounds like it does now."

Original stereo was mixed from generation after generation of 4 track over-dubs, new version is a single multi-track. Fully approved by Paul and Ringo. Most dynamic, clear and powerful version of all.

Way better drum and bass sound. Best recording of McCartney's bass and Starr's drums so far. Tight with great core tone and attack. Lead vocal centred, with backups panned wide.

This actually sounds a little bit like a live band in real time. Vocals centred and more of a soundstage for all the instruments. Still obviously multi-tracked without a real room feel.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

The audience sound at the beginning of "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" the song was taken from a recording George Martin did of a comedy troupe called Beyond the Fringe, who were a comedy troupe consisting of Dudley Moore, Peter Cook, Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller who were up at Cambridge University.

Mono

Full, clear and instruments fairly distinct except drums, vocals a little forward in the music, great bass punch and tone

Stereo

Lead guitar and vocal panned hard right, crowd noise horns and backup vocals left, drums more presence, bass less presence

17 Remix

Guitar positively snarls on the right. Drums explosive on the left. Vocal centred. Brass hard right, crowd laugh left.

With a Little Help from My Friends

Mono

Full, clear and distinct, until you listen to the 17 remix, which blows it away.

Stereo

Vocals panned mostly left, bass and drums right

17 Remix

Drums centred and panned wide and vocals centred. Martin feels Ringo's voice doesn't sound so "lonely."

Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds

Mono

Auto double tracking used on vocals to create a chorus effect. "John didn't like the sound of his own voice," said George Martin. Blend of voice with harpsichord at opening is very nice. Then it all gets murky when the backup vocals are added.

Stereo

Auto double tracking couldn't be used. Vocals centred at the beginning, then moved right, then back centre again, then back right. This happens over and over.

17 Remix

Auto double tracking added back, and harpsichord moved to center. Nice kick drum and cymbals. Clarity and psychedelic impact heightened dramatically.

Getting Better

Mono

Great opening guitar, vocals a little muddy. Drums and bass muffled, except for a pretty good splash cymbal.

Stereo

Drop down section missing half the impact. Rhythm guitar panned left, lead guitar right, lead vocal centred, backup vocals left and right, drums widely separated

17 Remix

Drums and rhythm guitar panned wide. Bass far right, very punchy and deep. Drop down section clearer. Great left channel keyboard entrance. Fade out moves all the way to the right channel.

Fixing a Hole

Mono

Harpsichord and rhythm guitar blend nicely. Mostly drum cymbal splashes heard with a little snare. Kick drum buried.

Stereo

Harpsichord, bass, drums left. Vocals and lead guitar right. Vocals move more toward center on chorus.

17 Remix

Drums and harpsichord still left, rhythm guitar and bass right. Solo guitar centred. Everything crystal clear.

She's Leaving Home

Mono

Great centred and full harp sound. Great cello. Other strings quite muted at opening, but more presence later.

Stereo

Mixed down a semi-tone from the mono. Harp panned right, cello left, remainder of strings centred, vocal left. Backup vocals panned right.

17 Remix

Can hear the strings much better, more cohesive with the cello sound. Panning the same, pretty much, except high backup vocals panned left, low panned right. Very effective.

Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite!

Mono

John wanted "the background sound of a fairground...not really a calliope but something that conjures up the imagery of a fair or circus." The band actually recorded all live together with George Martin on harmonium.

Stereo

Vocals right, drum centred or a bit left. Harmonium left. Calliope right.

17 Remix

Wow. Much clearer and more aggressive than the original mono. Tons of punch in bass and drums and crash cymbal. Chopped up "calliope tape" swirls much more. This is the track that made me love the album when I was 13 and it is much stronger now! Makes the original mono sound absolutely murky.

Within You Without You

Mono

Monotonous except for the tabla.

Stereo

Sitar panned widely right and left. Tabla left. Vocal right.

17 Remix

George's voice much more open, along with all the whiny strings. This is no longer totally boring!

When I'm Sixty-Four

Mono

Paul's voice sped up purposely. Excellent clarinet and bass clarinet sound. Actually, a little too much presence against the vocals.

Stereo

Bass clarinet and clarinet right and tone quite clear. Vocal left. Tubular bells left. Bass muffled. Drums muted. Backup vocals right.

17 Remix

Bass clarinet articulation and tone clearer and denser, clarinet tone more ringing. Vocal centred and more forward than the mono. Drum presence enhanced. Bass clear and distinct. Background vocals panned left and right. Way more "swing."

Lovely Rita

Mono

Vaunted mono is muddied as hell compared to the 17 remixes, except the opening jangly guitar and the snare drum and cymbals are pretty good.

Stereo

Vocals, bass, drums left. Then vocal moves more centred on 1st verse. Right channel quite empty until vocal percussion and strings added. Piano comes in on hard right.

17 Remix

Guitar jangles clear as a bell, bass and drums punch like mad.

Good Morning Good Morning

Mono

Ringo's drumming just excellent. Paul also playing kick-drum. But it all sounds muted after the opening rooster. Can barely hear the rhythm guitar and the horns.

Stereo

Horns and vocal opening hard right. Rooster slightly left. Lead vocal slightly left. Drums all left. Horns murky and processed.

17 Remix

Wow! Turned up Ringo's drums! Clarity and distinction of all instruments and vocals improved.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Reprise)

Mono

Drums crisp. Guitar tone full. Bass murky. Then everything blends into the crowd noise a bit.

Stereo

Drums spread widely. Guitar slightly left. Bass murky. Vocals widely panned.

17 Remix

Count in reminds me of the very first track from Please Please Me. Percussive. Bass still murky with widely panned vocals.

A Day in the Life

Mono

Very peaceful opening, piano quite muted. Ringo drum fills are like an explosion, almost takes over!

Stereo

Guitar left. Piano right. Voice hard right, then moves to centre, then left. Drums very muted and panned wide, except tambourine more present and panned left. Bass murky. Alarm clock left, voice back hard right, piano left. Voice moves left on "read the news," then back right with "turn you on."

17 Remix

Guitar left with piano. Voice stays centred. Drums are back to more distinct. More bass presence and definition with deeper darker tone. Much more dynamic string take with more brass sound from the orchestra. The alarm clock is nowhere near as dramatic, since everything else has so much presence.... maybe should have moved it up in the mix! Drums back to explosive and now in the right channel. Wordless backup vocals swirl beautifully...very ethereal. Ending far more powerful.



The White Album

Stereo all the way. The vocal panning issues from most of the previous albums are not apparent here. If there is panning of lead vocals one way or the other it is minor, not hard all the way.... except for Savoy Truffle, where the lead is panned hard right. However, I still prefer the Stereo mix because of the nasty snarl of the guitars and the great aggressive buzz of the horns.

That goes for all the tracks. Many of the mono tracks seem very muted or even muffled, and the stereo version is fuller, richer, and clearer with far more distinct timbre on each and every instrument. The bass and drum sound is great!

Most of the stereo tracks were mixed the same day and given equal consideration...a first!!

Here are a few comments on specific tracks:

Back in the U.S.S.R.

Gotta have that airplane coming in from R to L! Plus, the shouts and piano under the guitar solo missing in the mono.

Dear Prudence

Written for Mia Farrow's younger sister, who spent extra time in meditation on the trip to India with the boys...John wanted her to "come out and play" more.

Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da

Mono missing the great hand-clapping in the intro, the double tracking on Paul's voice, and the orchestral tag.

Wild Honey Pie

Mono missing the hand-claps.

While My Guitar Gently Weeps

The very first 8 track recording at Abbey Road. The Clapton guitar tone on the Gibson Les Paul is captured beautifully and remains loud in mono after the solo break, not in stereo. Who cares, the mono guitar sound is just not the same. Near the end of the fadeout only the stereo has "yeah yeah yeah", even though it is a few seconds shorter than the mono mix.

Happiness Is a Warm Gun

"No, it's not about heroin. A gun magazine was sitting there with a smoking gun on the cover and an article that I never read inside called "Happiness Is a Warm Gun." I took it right from there. I took it as the terrible idea of just having shot some animal...it was at the beginning of my relationship with Yoko and I was very sexually oriented then. When we weren't in the studio, we were in bed...I call Yoko Mother or Madam just in an offhand way. The rest doesn't mean anything. It's just images of her." – John Lennon, Playboy, 1980

Blackbird

Vocals panned left, but not that hard. The tapping is Paul's foot.

Rocky Raccoon

George Martin on honky-tonk piano.

Why Don't We Do It in the Road?

Mono missing the hand-clapping on the intro.

I Will

Paul sings the bass line with himself.

Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except Me and My Monkey

The screaming after "come on" in the last verse is different in mono and stereo.

Sexy Sadie

Stereo version has an extra tap on the tambourine at the start. Mono lacks bass until the vocal starts.

Helter Skelter

Stereo is the definitive version we all know with the full extra minute fade back up and Ringo yelling about the blisters on his fingers.

Long, Long, Long

Double tracking on George's voice on the mono is way out sync at times.

Savoy Truffle

Organ missing from last verse in mono.

Revolution 9

Far more surreal and hallucinogenic in stereo.